

As parents at the Ironbound Community School we have developed a new consciousness which includes challenging, choosing and changing. The right of parents to choose the type and form of their children's education has not always been in the grasp of ~~working class~~ ^{Mont} parents. They rarely have been able to exercise ~~the~~ right or participate in and shape the type of education their children receive. The Ironbound Community School was established in 1971 with concern for children and for parents. The School's success in the 70's led the N.J. Department of education to view it as an important model of parent decision-making, staff-parent cooperation and open education. As a former N.J. ~~Commissioner of Education~~ ^{Official} observed and I quote, "Not only do Ironbound parents exercise their right to shape their children's education, but in the process they have gained vital knowledge, skills, and self-confidence."

The development and utilization of these human resources is probably the most important step we can take in reshaping and remaking our cities into liveable communities" end quote.

The common spirit that flows through our program stems from the effort of parents to achieve the finest quality education for ~~the~~ their children.

At the Ironbound Community School parents working together is our cornerstone and is extremely important to our program. Our school has been put together by parents. Its success depends heavily on active parent involvement and it is vital that it remain that way. Each child enrolled in our school does not come as an isolated individual- he or she comes with a family. One of our basic concepts is that ~~our~~ school must be a family oriented

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educational ~~ex~~perience involving parents in the educational evolution of their children. Parent involvement is not casually invited- there is deep commitment to ~~in~~volve parents in the area in which they feel most comfortable- We consistently investigate the various areas in which each parent can participate according to his or her own interests and abilities. Parents are involved and active in every level and every activity of the school. Parents volunteer to ~~s~~it on various committees which oversee the various aspects of our program. ~~For~~ example, through the Personnel committee parents advertise and interview candidates for positions available in the school. The Welcoming Comm. welcomes and explains our program ~~st~~new parents and acts as a liaison between staff, parents, and students. In addition to active committee work parents and teachers work and come together in other ways on a constant basis.

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For example, three times a year parents receive in depth ,individual progress reports on their children. Small class meetings and larger parent meetings occur on a very regular ^{19th} basis. There is also a weekly newsletter that reports on various new developments in the classrooms and the school as a whole. Parents also work together on various projects like bake sales, flea markets, and recycling projects.

Parents are welcomed in the school and classrooms at all times. They ~~and~~ actively ~~and~~ participate , observe and volunteer in all classroom activities and are encouraged to do so. For example, on any given day one could observe parents in the classrooms reading a story to a group of students, working on a math problem with an individual or baking cookies.

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In addition to actively participating in their child's education, parents have experienced a wide range of learning experiences themselves. For example, they were the driving force in the negotiations which led to the school becoming a part of the Newark Public School System in 1974. They met with Board members, administrators and the Superintendent. Through their efforts a far sighted Board of Education recognized and acknowledged that the Community School and its parents had indeed created a viable and successful model program. Since becoming a Newark public school our parents have had extensive dealings with administrators at the Board of Education. We have continued to attend Board Meetings and have never hesitated to voice our concerns directly to administrators on issues which have concerned our children, staff and the city. The experience of actively dealing with an existing

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system has been an invaluable experience to our parents. As another example some of our parents have been inspired to continue their own education and through hard work and encouragement have obtained degrees from several colleges.

Article I, 18A:7A:6 of the N.J. State T and E laws states that schools must be committed to and encourage citizen involvement and self determination in decision making. The Ironbound community School was founded as and continues to be a parent involved school in all aspects and as such comply with these and all other T and E mandates.

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the validity of

I would like to comment personally on all the information that I just presented.

I came to the Ironbound Community School 6 years ago shy, and nervous about placing my child in an alternative school since I myself was the product of 12 years of parochial schooling. The response to my child and myself was immediate and gratifying. Over the past six years my participation was actively sought and welcomed. I began my involvement slowly and cautiously by spending time in my child's classroom as an observer and ~~proceeding~~

serving lunch, driving the school van, serving on various committees, ~~eventually~~ working in the classroom as a team teacher for three years

~~as~~ ^{as} ~~Pres. of the Parent Action Comm.~~

~~and~~ actively participating in all board of education matters pertaining to

the school ~~and ultimately sitting in President's office speaking to the~~ ^{I rec'd my assoc degree in Public Policy from St}

~~school of education.~~

Petro's
College
in June →

am

~~about extending my stay~~

~~on~~

~~at St. Pat's~~ ^{am pursuing my B.S. at St. Pat's}